
THINKING SKILLS

9694/42

Paper 4 Applied Reasoning

October/November 2017

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 50

Published

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| Question | Answer | Marks |
|----------|--|----------|
| 1 | <p data-bbox="320 215 817 247"><i>Award 1 mark for any of the following:</i></p> <ul data-bbox="376 287 1944 805" style="list-style-type: none"> • Although one arrow is 2.5 times the height of the other, its area is much greater, which gives the impression that the difference is greater than it is. • There is an inconsistency between the headline claim and the subsequent information – 2½ times more = 250%, not 150%. It is likely that the headline phrase has used the word ‘more’ in an attempt to mislead the reader. • We don’t know what the absolute success rate is, so ‘150% more’ may still be insignificant • “More likely to lose weight” is conflated with “lose more weight”. • The claim “With OUR weight-loss aid...” strongly implies that their weight-loss aid is being compared to other products, but is misleading as the comparison is actually with “diet alone” • The claim that users lose 150% more weight is unclear: it could be the minimum, the average, the maximum etc. • There is ambiguity in the phrase “by diet alone”: it could mean simply ‘nutritional intake’, rather than those with a clear reduced diet plan. • The group of people considered as trying to lose weight ‘by diet alone’ is ill-defined – it might contain people hardly trying at all. • People who buy and use a weight-loss aid are likely to be more committed to losing weight than some of those relying on “diet alone”, and that may be the reason for the greater level of success. | 5 |

| Question | Answer | Marks |
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| 2 | <p><i>1 mark for each element (maximum 4 if MC not identified)</i></p> <p>CA – (Many of the older generation say) reality TV corrupts society (by portraying a false picture of reality)</p> <p>MC – (On the contrary,) we should (stop sneering at it and) celebrate its existence.</p> <p>IC – the advantages of reality TV far outweigh the risks.</p> <p>IC – Reality TV is very popular</p> <p>CA – It might not exercise the brain cells too much</p> <p>IC – that [our choosing of governments on the basis of popularity] is a good enough reason for us to be comfortable with the rise of reality TV</p> <p>CA – Some people complain about exploitation of participants in some of these shows</p> <p>IC – these concerns are exaggerated.</p> <p>IC – Reality TV is good for familial and even societal cohesion.</p> <p>IC – reality TV is often educational.</p> <p>IC – (So) reality TV can improve societies, (too).</p> | 6 |

| Question | Answer | Marks |
|----------|--|-------|
| 3 | <p><i>2 marks for a developed version of any of the following points. 1 mark for a weak or incomplete version of any of the following points.</i></p> <p><i>Paragraph 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referring to those holding a contrary opinion as ‘the [sneering] older generation’ could be seen as a rhetorical attempt to persuade younger people who hold contrary opinions to reconsider those opinions. • Overdrawn IC: “the advantages of reality TV far outweigh the risks.” Some advantages are discussed but the risks are not explored so the claim cannot be made on the basis of the reasoning present. • There is not an effective response to the counter-position. • Straw man: the reason given for the disapproval of the older generation is weak and orchestrated to support the author’s response. <p><i>Paragraph 3</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeal to popularity: although, as the author argues that popularity is relevant, the appeal does not necessarily represent a weakness. • Potential inconsistency between the claim in paragraph 2 that reality TV “does reflect society” and that it “provides an escape from the worries of their mundane lives”. • Significance: Without knowing the number of other shows or the percentage of output that 176 represents we cannot know if this number is significant. • Weak comparison: there are many important differences between the process of selecting a government and the justification for lack of concern about a television genre. • Assumption: that there are no other valid explanations for why supply of reality TV shows is high – like the fact that they are cheap to make. <p><i>Paragraph 4</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contradiction: “Reality shows treat their contestants with respect” is contradicted by commercial businesses, and by implication other contestants, being ‘humiliated’. • The legitimacy of humiliating businesses rests on the assumption that the makers of TV programmes will be appropriately determining whether a product is ‘good enough’. • Assumption: In order to see it as a plus point one must assume that real people being on TV is a good thing / that real people think their being on TV is a good thing. | 9 |

| Question | Answer | Marks |
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| 3 | <p><i>Paragraph 5</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contradiction: Reference to all generations is in contrast to the claim in paragraph 2 that the ‘older generation’ have a negative view of reality TV. • Assumption: that only reality TV offers an opportunity to discuss shared experiences. <p><i>Paragraph 6</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to support the IC, one must assume that the examples given offer educational content that is better than the alternatives, e.g. soap operas. • Assumption: that the children will eat the food that is served. • Assumption: that the change in school meal provision in the UK has improved society. | |

| Question | Answer | Marks |
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| 4 | <p data-bbox="320 217 1285 248">‘TV companies should reduce their output of reality TV programmes.’</p> <p data-bbox="320 284 701 316"><i>Specimen Level 4 Answers</i></p> <p data-bbox="320 351 589 383"><i>Support (790 words)</i></p> <p data-bbox="320 418 1951 520">Although fewer of the documents appear to support restrictions on reality television output by TV companies, the reasons for a reduction in reality TV are strong and the objections somewhat trivial. For these reasons, TV companies should reduce their output of reality TV programmes.</p> <p data-bbox="320 555 1957 992">There is real concern, and some hard evidence, that much (although not all) reality TV influences the behaviour of the public in a negative way. Document 4 is a reported speech and could be seen as little more than a series of negative quotes; however, the concerns it expresses are real: harmful to society, the way to get ratings is to get evil, aggressive, confrontational, vulgar, obsessed with sex. These could be dismissed as mere soundbites expressed by someone who, from the tone of the piece, is clearly biased. However, Mr Humphrys clearly has a lot of experience and, by implication, expertise in the area of broadcasting output. Furthermore, he has been invited to speak at a prestigious lecture to an audience made up of the leaders of the TV industry. So his views are clearly respected. More importantly, his view is corroborated by the less easy to dismiss evidence in Doc 2. Aggression in reality TV shows does seem to breed aggression in audiences, much more so than aggression in fictional crime dramas. One possible explanation is that, real or not, reality TV is portrayed as such, while fiction is just that – audiences are able to suspend their disbelief and (luckily) not mimic such behaviour. The research itself, as carried out by a university, is likely to have been peer reviewed by experts with no bias and a vested interest in professional integrity. The counter-example provided by UT in Doc 3 can be dismissed as a hasty generalisation from one person’s opinion, much as one should do with e-mailed comments on a TV news show.</p> <p data-bbox="320 1027 1951 1264">The significance of these data is highlighted by the upper graph in Doc 5. We are given little information about the way the information was collected, but it is hard to deny that reality TV is watched, to a large extent, by a younger demographic. There is no information about under-18s but, if the trend continues (and it is a very clear trend), it is likely that under 18s watch reality TV a lot. This is corroborated by the pro-reality TV Doc 1 in a dismissive comment about the older generation. It is generally agreed that offensive behaviour in society is bad, and that teenagers are more prone to offensive behaviour. If reality TV promotes aggressive behaviour and is viewed, to a large extent, by this age group, then it follows that reality TV is bad.</p> | 30 |

| Question | Answer | Marks |
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| 4 | <p>The other great harm done by reality TV is that, on a personal level, it humiliates people. Moreover, it encourages the public to delight in that humiliation and the dashing of false hope, and to see this as normal and acceptable. This point is made by Mr Humphrys in Doc 4 “Reality TV turns human beings into freaks for us to gawp at.” Doc 1 attempts to dismiss this concern but the word the author uses, ‘most’, is an admission that some (or many) shows do exploit participants and some (or many) participants do not know what they are letting themselves in for. The subsequent comment about businesses clearly implies that Simon is aware that many participants are humiliated and contradicts his own point somewhat. If one believes that younger people are more vulnerable to this type of humiliation then this point is corroborated by the upper graph in Doc 5 and the aforementioned comment about the older generation in Doc 1.</p> <p>The arguments against a reduction in output are not strong. The argument put forward by Doc 1 that we should accept it because it is popular is just that – an appeal to popularity. Popularity is no indication of worth. The Nazi party was very popular in pre-WW2 Germany.</p> <p>The point about education and highlighting societal problems made by Doc 1 and ZY and WV in Doc 3 seems like special pleading. There are many other, much more reliable, ways to do these things, schools, documentaries, scientific research. Walking is a means by which 1000 miles can be travelled, but there are much better ways of travelling 1000 miles.</p> <p>The argument that reality TV is just part of a wider output is tempting but the question is not “Should reality TV be banned altogether?”; one can accept a place for it and some is much less harmful than others, as admitted by Mr Humphrys in Doc 4. However, a lot of it encourages public humiliation and false hope and promotes unpleasant behaviour. For these reasons alone its contribution to the schedules should be reduced.</p> <p><i>Challenge (856 words)</i></p> <p>TV companies should not reduce their output of reality TV programmes. Even if it were established that the reality TV output is of lower quality than other genres, which it has not been, television operates in a free market and, in such circumstances, demand justifies supply.</p> <p>The arguments that reality TV is somehow ‘to be feared’ are knee-jerk and poorly considered. Document 4 is a prime example. It contains no facts, merely the opinions of someone so clearly biased that his views should be heavily scrutinised. By his own admission Mr Humphrys has not watched television for 5 years, which calls into question his ability to comment on the subject. His claims that it is somehow harmful are, to an extent, backed up by Doc 2. However, this is one example, focussing on a small part of reality TV output, which is varied.</p> | |

| Question | Answer | Marks |
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| 4 | <p>In fact, a feature of the counter-position is that it tends to focus on only a few of the worst examples. Doc 2 looked at two types of reality TV, but from reading the article one could be forgiven for forming the opinion that only the one containing aggressive behaviour was part of the much maligned genre. In Doc 4, Mr Humphrys uses many pejorative terms but contradicts himself when he praises <i>Operatunity</i>, which, from the description given, must be reality TV. He is of the opinion that much of reality TV is poor quality, but this claim could be made about other genres – we have all seen a comedy show that wasn't funny! The terms he uses are value judgements based on opinion. This highlights another problem with those who criticise reality TV. How does one judge worth? Mr Humphrys clearly does not like (most of) the reality TV he has seen. Even Doc 1 acknowledges that some people do not like it. But many people do not like sport, or documentaries. It is almost impossible to measure quality in television and, since much of the counter-position depends on a belief that reality TV is of low quality, its position is severely weakened.</p> <p>Even if you do not like reality TV, you ought to acknowledge that its popularity generates revenue. This point is made in Doc 1 and again by SR in Doc 3. The fact that they are cheap to make is often couched in terms of a criticism, as in Doc 4, but cheap means large profits which can be ploughed into funding less profitable shows that appeal to different parts of the TV audience. Mr Humphrys appears to have enjoyed <i>Life of Mammals</i>; it is likely that nature documentaries like this are expensive to make. It is entirely possible that such a programme would not have been made without the help of money from reality TV.</p> <p>In any genre there are good examples and bad examples. As Simon in Doc 1 states, television is about entertainment and if the public do not like it they would not watch. Over time, good examples get remade and bad ones fall by the wayside. The lower graph in Doc 5 shows that the proportion of airtime occupied by reality TV varies year-on-year but peaked in 2007-8 and has been declining since then. This could be consistent with effective decision making by TV executives about which shows are worth continuing and which are not.</p> <p>This leads on to the most compelling reason for not telling TV companies how to do their job. Most television operates in a free market, as QP in Doc 3 states. Reality TV is clearly very popular, as Doc 1 and SR in Doc 3 both state. The usefulness of the '176 programmes in the UK' statistic is questionable if we don't know the total, or even the year, but the point still stands – we would not be having the debate if it were not a popular genre. As long as it remains popular, commercial TV companies have every right to manage it, within the law, as they see fit.</p> <p>The exception to this rule is public service broadcasting, which exists in many countries. This point is made by NO in Doc 3, and the sub-text of Doc 4 is that Mr Humphrys thinks the BBC, perhaps the most well-known public broadcaster, has more reality TV than he would like. In the case of public service broadcasting it might be appropriate for members of the public to comment. However, public opinion, as witnessed by the range of documents, is varied. Doc 2 and 4 could be described as arguing for restrictions on reality TV, although 4 lacks credibility and 2 could be interpreted differently. Document 1 and most of Doc 3 seem perfectly comfortable with reality TV output as it is.</p> | |

| Question | Answer | Marks |
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| 4 | Unless their output is clearly damaging, it is not up to you or me to tell TV executives how to do their job. In a free society, the burden of proof rests on those who wish to restrict the freedom of others. As that burden has not been met, TV companies should not reduce their output of reality TV programmes. If we don't like it, we can press the 'off' button. | |

| Level | Structure | Max 8 | Quality of argument | Max 8 | Use of documents | Max 8 | Treatment of counter positions | Max 6 |
|-------|--|----------|--|----------|--|----------|---|----------|
| 4 | <p>Precise conclusion and accomplished argument structure with consistent use of intermediate conclusions. Likely to include at least two of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strands of reasoning • suppositional reasoning • analogy • evidence • examples <p>Argument is structured so the thought process is made clear. Uses vocabulary of reasoning appropriately and effectively to support argument.</p> | 7–8 | <p>Cogent and convincing reasoning which answers the question which was asked. Subtle thinking about the issue. Use of relevant own ideas and ideas from documents. Very few significant gaps or flaws.</p> | 7–8 | <p>Perceptive, relevant and accurate use of documents to support reasoning. References 3+ documents. Sustained and confident evaluation of documents to support reasoning. (Two or more valid evaluative references to documents). Able to combine information from two or more documents and draw a precise inference.</p> | 7–8 | <p>Consideration of key counter arguments and effective response to these. Use of own ideas in response to counter arguments not mentioned in the documents. Use of valid critical tools to respond to counter arguments. Effective use of appropriate terminology.</p> | 5–6 |
| 3 | <p>Clear conclusion that is more than “I agree”. Clear argument structure, which may be simple and precise or attempt complexity with some success. Appropriate use of intermediate conclusions. Use of other argument elements to support reasoning. Generally makes thinking clear. Appropriate use of vocabulary of reasoning.</p> | 5–6 | <p>Effective and persuasive reasoning which answers the question which was asked. (Although there may be some irrelevance or reliance on dubious assumptions.) Use of own ideas and ideas from documents. Few significant gaps or flaws.</p> | 5–6 | <p>Relevant and accurate use of documents which supports reasoning. References 3+ documents. Some evaluation and comparison of documents to support reasoning. Inference drawn from at least 1 document.</p> | 5–6 | <p>Consideration of key counter arguments and effective response to these. Response uses own ideas or is developed from documents. Some use of appropriate terminology.</p> | 3–4 |

| Level | Structure | Max 8 | Quality of argument | Max 8 | Use of documents | Max 8 | Treatment of counter positions | Max 6 |
|-------|---|----------|--|----------|---|----------|---|----------|
| 2 | <p>Conclusion stated but may be “I agree”.</p> <p>Sufficient clarity for meaning to be clear throughout.</p> <p>Structure may be easy to follow but brief or a longer argument which has a less clear structure.</p> <p>Uses reasons.</p> <p>Some appropriate use of vocabulary of reasoning.</p> | 3–4 | <p>A reasoned stance which attempts to answer the question which was asked.</p> <p>Some support for the conclusion. (Although there may be considerable irrelevance or reliance on dubious assumptions.)</p> <p>Some thinking/own ideas about the issue.</p> <p>Use of rhetorical questions and emotive language.</p> <p>Some significant gaps or flaws.</p> | 3–4 | <p>Some relevant use of documents to support reasoning, but some documents used indiscriminately.</p> <p>Some comparison of documents or some critical evaluation of documents or reasoned inference drawn from document.</p> | 3–4 | <p>Inclusion of counter argument or counter assertion.</p> <p>Response is direct but weak or taken entirely from documents.</p> | 2 |
| 1 | <p>Attempt to construct an argument.</p> <p>Unclear conclusion, multiple conclusions or no conclusion.</p> <p>Disjointed, incoherent reasoning.</p> <p>Use of examples in place of reasoning.</p> <p>Possibly a discourse or a rant.</p> <p>Reasons presented with no logical connection.</p> <p>Documents considered sequentially.</p> <p>Substantial irrelevant material.</p> | 1–2 | <p>Attempt to answer the general thrust of the question.</p> <p>Attempt to support their view.</p> <p>Excessive use of rhetorical questions and emotive language.</p> <p>Ideas which are contradictory.</p> | 1–2 | <p>Some, perhaps implicit, use of documents.</p> <p>No attempt at critical evaluation.</p> <p>No comparison of documents.</p> | 1–2 | <p>Inclusion of counter argument or counter assertion.</p> <p>Response is direct but ineffective.</p> | 1 |